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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WIND LEGENDRY

"To primitive man," says an English writer, Miss Cicely M. Botley, "one of the most surprising facts in nature was that air, one of the gentlest and most impalpable of natural objects, could also be one of the strongest and most destructive. So we have the Hindu tale of the Maruts, or 'crushers,' who rage over the tree-tops in their fury, with the rain for their garments, but, when their work is done, assume the form of new-born babes.

"The weird shrieks of the wind have given rise to many a wild tale. The peasants of mediaeval England heard the wailing of unbaptized children in the wind, and the Tyrolese tell of the 'poor souls' in the autumn storms. Throughout the Teutonic world there is the tale of the 'wild hunt' of spirits rushing howling through the air on stormy nights. Since the seventeenth century, at least, it has been associated with Christmas in Germany, and in Iceland it is called the Yule host.

"Often the old Teutonic wind-god Woden is the leader of the 'wild hunt,' and in Norway it was once believed that the old Norse gods made war on Christians on Christmas eve, coming down from the mountains with wild shrieks and great blasts of wind, and carrying off any unsuspecting mortal."

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